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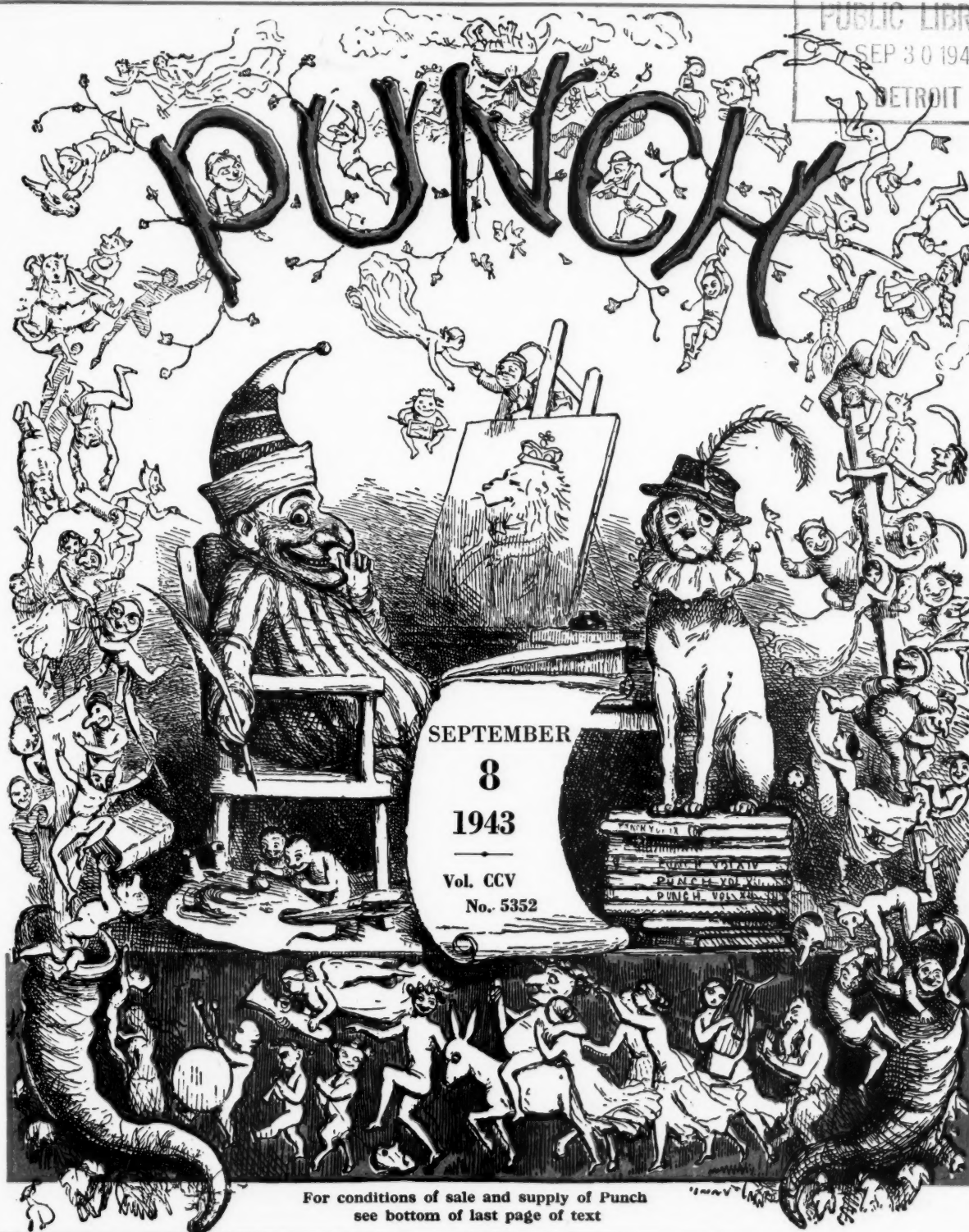
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in Peace
or War

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DETROIT



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Player's Please



Salute the Home Guard



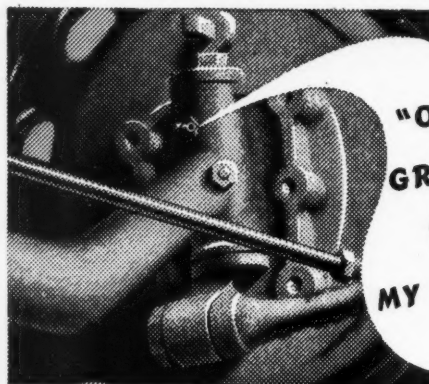
In Britain's darkest and finest hour they sprang to arms — that were not there! With shot guns forgotten revolvers and sticks they watched the night sky : then the arms came rifles, grenades, machine guns, and they learned to use them. After the day's work they drilled, practised, studied tactics and now an army — mighty to strike. On their day of rest they attack the power station, they defend the mill; they crawl, they patrol, they charge — Come on Jerry if you still feel like it — But remember you will be welcomed on the beaches at the cross-roads at the street corner. everywhere in this island by the biggest toughest citizen army in history!

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TO END
MY MISERY!"**

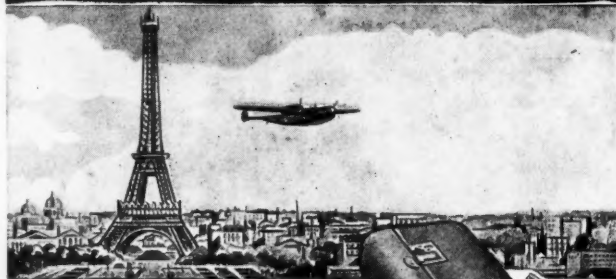
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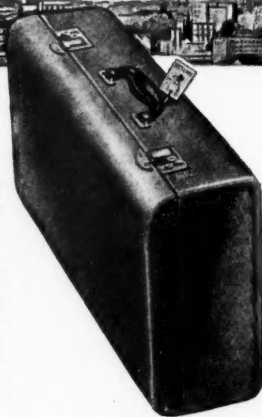


PARIS will always be Paris . . . but never again the Paris we used to know. The rest of the world will have changed too and most of us, after the war, will need a guide . . . some constant standard against which to gauge our impressions. We shall travel, of course, with



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tell; a story of the magnifi-
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They have entered the Ser-
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untrained—their sole qualifi-
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help the war effort. In a
few weeks they have mastered
their jobs and helped Britain
to attain her proud record—
of the highest war production
per head of population of any
country in the world.

*In succeeding spaces we shall
pay tribute to the millions of
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Services, and entered the
factories, and say to all—*

Salute!

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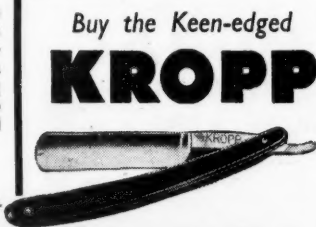
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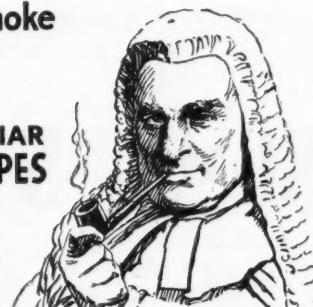


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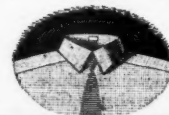
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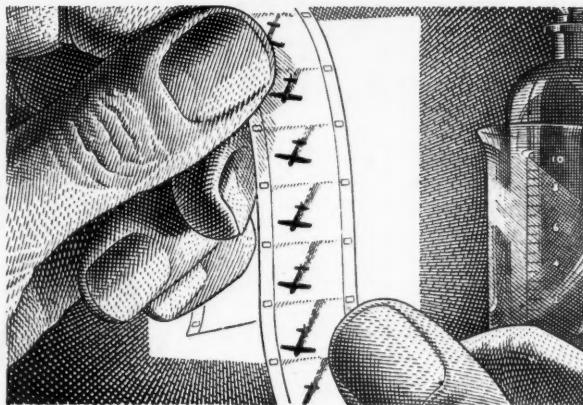
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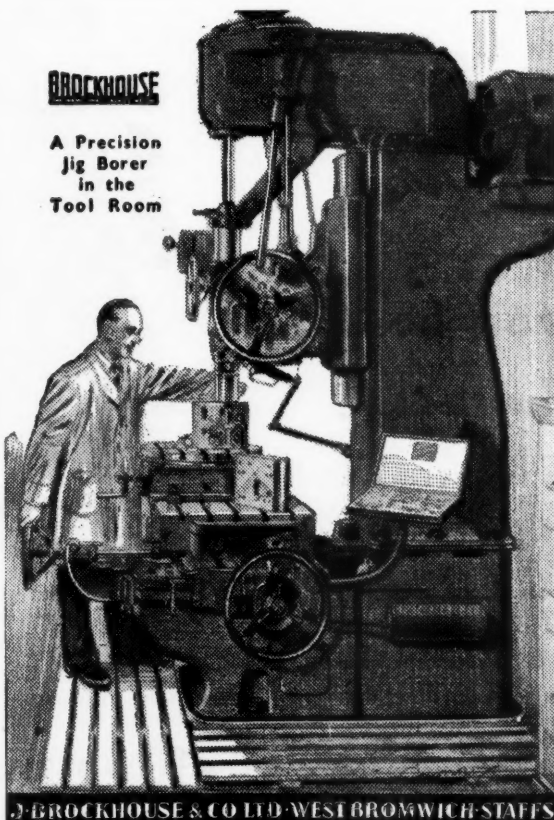
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Your executor must be at hand whenever required, though the date be far distant. He should possess the combined qualities of business experience and sound judgment which this Company provides.

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LOEWE FREE SERVICE. You are invited to send your Loewe Briars for cleaning by our experts which will preserve those in use or bring into service your past favourites.

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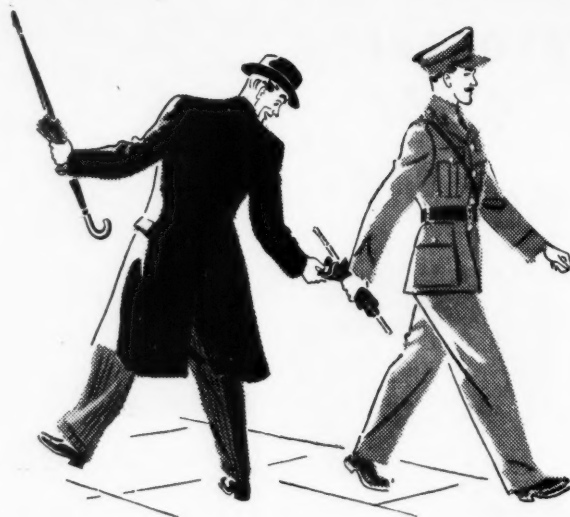
Those twenty precious coupons must last until February, that is why it is essential to buy clothes that will give the utmost service.

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SELO FILMS made by **ILFORD**
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ILFORD, LONDON



PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCV No. 5352

September 8 1943

Charivaria

IN view of the increasing number of exploits by naval units against the Italian railways it is reported that the Germans are seriously considering the installation of anti-submarine devices in the Brenner.

While Hitler is busily imposing security measures on the conquered territories it is observed that Marshal Stalin adheres stolidly to his policy of declaring a state of emergency in the Wehrmacht.

We gather that Hitler has recently been trying to persuade satellite states to supply him with armaments. He was offered a wide choice—no tanks, no planes, or no guns.

General von Falkenhorst, Commander-in-Chief in Norway, is said to be out of favour with Herr Hitler. So far the date of his accidental death has not been fixed.



A music-hall artist, suspended by his ankles from a trapeze, juggles with three billiard balls, and, by means of a chain gripped in his teeth, lifts a lady assistant into the air while she plays "The Lost Chord" on a saxophone. A remarkable feature of the entertainment is that no claim is made

that it is a cultural performance.

Exclusive
"LATEST NEWS
'SOMETHING GOING TO HAPPEN'
Stop Press column.

Von Ribbentrop is reported to have been travelling backwards and forwards between Germany and Switzerland arranging for a house in which he may eventually take refuge. It is not surprising to learn that he has been double-crossing the Alps.



We await a pronouncement from the Minister of Information that Frau Goering is just an overgrown Brownie.

According to a magazine article the earliest bird existed nearly 100,000,000 years ago. Will worms *never* learn?

According to a paragraph in the *Daily Telegraph* the Balkans want peace. It really does seem that they're desperate enough now to try anything.

A cricket match at Hayling Island, Hants, was stopped to enable spectators to watch a German plane being brought down. This confirms the old contention that cricket fans don't take the game seriously enough.

Impending Apology

"More than 40 M.P.s, among them Conservatives, Liberals, and Independent members, are to approve the following Members, are to ask the House of Commons:— . . . "—*Farming Paper*.

A military writer says he cannot understand why Himmler suddenly decided to take on a new post. Can it be that he realized that it was just about his turn to be arrested in his old one?



A newly-appointed German general is only forty-five. Well, who knows? He may reach forty-six.

A story has been told in court that a man tried to persuade his wife to get a divorce by offering her a bottle of whisky. Very few men could afford a divorce and a bottle of whisky at the same time.

Free Trade

THERE's heavy traffic on the road to-night
And all the market place is full of din
As wagon after wagon tipped with light
Goes up to carry cargo for Berlin.

And I remember we were off the map,
Our cities broken and our ports in flame,
Nothing was left of England, not a scrap
Except the memory of an ancient name.

And yet, despite the sayings of the seers,
We still send out our travellers over all
The Reich that is to stand a thousand years,
The soil on which no bomb shall ever fall.

EVOE.

Bar Sinister

"WELL?" Wilson said, settling himself down,
"what is it going to be?"
"Beer," I said, after a little thought.

Wilson said he would have a small Scotch, but the waiter thought differently. He said there was only gin left. There was, however, a choice of what we could have with it; we could have water or nothing.

We chose water—not much water to start with, and then, after the first sip, quite a lot of it. This, I suppose, was because the water was particularly good. When we had finished our drinks we had two more, as Wilson had paid for the first round. I mean nothing derogatory by this remark, Wilson is one of my oldest friends. But anyone will tell you that the chances of a second round are slimmer if Wilson hasn't paid for the first, than vice versa. They say too that one of his shoulders is lower than the other on account of prolonged fumbling in his trouser-pockets beside innumerable taxi-cabs, but this I do not believe. Admittedly one of his shoulders is lower than the other, but to prove their case his detractors would have to show that he persistently fumbles in one pocket rather than the other, and it has always seemed to me that he fumbles equally in both.

We had even more water with our second drink. "A long, cool, summer drink," said I, "ought to be sucked up through a straw, really."

"A wick," said Wilson, "would be more suitable."

A party of four had just come in and we watched them idly as they disposed themselves about a table separated from us only by a flight of three little steps. Two of them were American officers, two not.

"They always seem to get the best, those chaps," said Wilson resignedly.

"Oh, I don't know," I said. "The one with all that frizzy hair over her face doesn't get me anywhere."

"How vulgar!" he said.

We listened with a certain unChristian amusement while the four of them debated what they were going to have. The officers were solid for beer, and one of the girls fairly soon made up her mind in favour of whisky, but the other just couldn't get it fixed. Four times she decided to have gin-and-lime, and four times cried out that she wasn't sure if she wouldn't rather have a lager after all. In the end she put in a bid for a gin-and-orange. Rather a changeable type.

"Well, well," murmured Wilson, as the waiter—our waiter—approached them, "they've had their fun. It is better to travel hopefully than to arrive. Certainly in this case," he added, taking a cautious sip.

However, the affair wasn't quite at an end. The changeable girl—her name was Angela—said, with an indescribably feminine air, that when she said gin-and-orange, she didn't mean gin and orange, all cordial if they knew what she meant, but gin and orange bitters, or did she mean just bitters, but anyway, it didn't matter; while the other girl, the whisky-drinker, suddenly veered right round in favour of beer. "But only a half," she said, because no girl likes to be thought mannish.

The waiter, who had it in his power to put a stop to all this nonsense, said nothing. Nobody had troubled to address him yet. Very well then, let them get on with it. Let them argue themselves dry, let them talk and talk about drink until the desire for a good honest pint of ale rose to an overmastering, all-consuming passion. So much the better. Then would be the time for that famous "Gin only" speech of his. It ought to go over big to-night. So he stood, his tray poised between his finger-tips, waiting.

"I like that waiter," Wilson told me. "He's got a sense of timing. Now watch."

Angela had made up her mind, or maybe the party had taken a majority vote, but anyway the thing was settled.

"Four beers, waiter," said one of the Americans.

But even then the waiter, that splendid man, said nothing. He made a pretence of writing the order down on his little pad, and went silently away.

"This is rich," said Wilson, rocking backwards and forwards in his delight. "This is a man after my own heart. Pretends to go off to the bar, and then back he'll come to tell them he's sorry but they've just run out of beer. Then they'll all order whisky, and back he'll come again to tell them it's a thousand pities but they've just run out of that too."

"I know," I said happily. "So that they'll think they might just have been in time to get beer or whisky or both, if only they'd been a bit quicker about ordering."

"They won't half pitch into that Angela," said Wilson.

However, after a while the waiter came back with four beers.

"D'you see that, Wilson?" I said in a low voice.

"See it!" cried Wilson. "I should jolly well think I do see it. It's an absolute scandal. Here we are, in our own country, palmed off with this execrable concoction, while—"

"Hush, Wilson," I said. "Perhaps if you'd been a bit firmer with that waiter at the start—"

Wilson said he liked that. A fat lot I'd done, he considered, sitting there twiddling my thumbs while he paid. I thought it only fair to myself to point out that I had bought the second round.

"So I should jolly well hope," said Wilson, staring. "Even you would hardly sit there, I should imagine, letting me pay for round after round."

Pretty good, I thought, coming from a notorious shyster like Wilson.

"Anyway," he said, "I'm not standing for this. Here, waiter!"

"Gin, sir?" said the waiter amiably.

"Beer," we both said.

"Sorry, sir. We've only gin," said the waiter, falling headlong into the trap.

"I see," said Wilson quietly. "Then perhaps you will be good enough to explain what those four glasses up there contain."

"That's the Palm Lounge up there, sir," explained the



LOOKING EASTWARD

Mr. Punch's portrait of a "Triphibian"



"Blimey! don't you know nuffink but Brahms?"

waiter courteously, "served from another bar. You're in the Henry the Eighth Bar here, you know."

"I see. So we can get a beer if we go up those three steps, but not down here, is that it?"

"Yes, sir."

"It didn't occur to you to mention that when we asked for beer at the start?"

"Oh, no, sir. I thought you preferred the Henry the Eighth Bar. Gentlemen often do."

"Even when there's nothing in it?"

The waiter smiled. He could see a joke as well as the next man.

"Oh, come on," said Wilson, and we hauled ourselves up and mounted the steps into the land of plenty.

When we had settled ourselves down, with our backs for some reason to the Anglo-American party, the waiter reappeared again, as respectful and friendly as ever. But he addressed us, perhaps as a point of etiquette after our translation, as if he had never seen us before.

"What would you like, sir?" he said.

"Beer," we both said, and I, because I didn't want to antagonize the man, added "please."

"It ought to taste good," said Wilson, "after all this."

I said nothing. I think, even before I saw the waiter

returning with an empty tray, I had some presage of disaster. That may be why, when he told us in the nicest possible way that they'd just run out of beer, I was less stunned than Wilson, and just capable of speech.

"What *have* you got, waiter?" I whispered.

"There's only gin now, sir," he said, and though I was watching him closely I swear not a muscle of his face flickered. Only from behind us, it seemed to me, there came a sudden splitting sound—as of stifled laughter.

I shall always believe it was Angela. No American would be so rude.

H. F. E.

The Mathematician in the Belfry

IN my continual pernickety search for self-improvement I am always buying or at least taking steps to acquire books about mathematics, which I usually forget to read. I have, however, read quite a bit of Mr. W. W. Sawyer's new one in the Pelican series, *Mathematician's Delight*, and I have to report that people like me have been overlooked again. The reason I can only put down to vested interests, or apathy, or the fact that so many

people under twenty-five are in the Forces, or the lateness of the harvest, or something.

"The main object of this book"—these are Mr. Sawyer's first words—"is to dispel the fear of mathematics," and we soon find that the idea behind all the first part is the same benevolently hearty notion that irradiated every page of Professor Hogben's *Mathematics for the Million*: the idea that mathematics can be made interesting to the ordinary person only by connecting it with the niggling little mathematical problems of everyday life. Mr. Sawyer shows you by implication that there is no such thing as mathematics, but only a particular way of looking at all the dear old subjects that have bored you for years. This does not, I'm sorry, but it does *not* improve my attitude to mathematics. The way to arouse in me a passion for mathematics would be to set about convincing me that it *did* have something to do with magic, that mathematicians *did* have those almost supernatural powers which Mr. Sawyer protests they are without.

For that matter, in spite of everything, I still believe they do have them. But Mr. Sawyer will not stoop to this method of arousing my interest: he insists on beginning with concrete or even wooden examples, and whenever possible even in the later pages he gets back to them. The important thing, he says, is "to have a clear picture in your mind," and so he enumerates "Some Experiments Connected With Geometry" which deal with a boy and two strips of wood, with rectangular tiles, with street lamps casting shadows, with a spider crawling over a brick. . . .

To be sure we get a bit airier further on in the book. Chapter XV even explains the Square Root of Minus One, the sort of thing that really does make me think there may be something entertaining in mathematics if only the people who know can be persuaded to let it out. And even on the way there Mr. Sawyer does, it is true, give a passing wave of the hand to the pure mathematicians, whom he calls "The Mathematicians on the Second Floor." He admits that they are a "very important body of people" and observes that they work "under the inner compulsion of an artistic urge." But the idea that anybody who knows hardly any mathematics could be more interested in pure mathematical symbols than in fooling around with all these bits of wood and string and nails and spiders he leaves completely out of consideration.

Consider for a moment all those questions that used to obfuscate our clouds of glory at school—the stuff about A and B filling a water-tank or digging a hole or dropping pussy down the well or what not. Before we could get anywhere at all with them we had to reduce them to pure mathematics: Mr. Sawyer will agree that that was the whole idea. They were given us in that form not to make them seem more interesting but to provide us with a little extra trouble at each end of the essential problem, so that we had less time to spend kicking the water-pipes. We should have been only too pleased to be given the statement $x \text{ equals } 2y$ to start with, instead of being told with a roguish chuckle that A took twice as long as B did. And if we went so far as to get a clear picture in our minds—if we took into account the psychology or the relative waist-measurements of A and B, or wondered whether pussy could have lodged on a brick halfway down the well—we got the answer wrong for that reason as well as for the customary one that our fives looked too much like our sixes.

This being so, where did this idea come from that everybody finds bits of wood and lengths of string more interesting than the Greek alphabet or the square-root sign?

Mr. Sawyer will not even believe that I can grasp the structural principles of his book unless he illustrates it as a pile of bricks. On page 40 we have a picture of "The General Plan of This Book," in which each chapter is represented by a block, resting on those other blocks which are the other chapters it is necessary to have read to understand it. All this does for me is to make me think of an exceedingly unbombworthy air-raid shelter, or an ancient monument with the bricks numbered for re-erection in the United States.

Mr. Sawyer must realize that if pure mathematicians are the Mathematicians on the Second Floor, I belong to a select but none the less quite numerous body of Mathematicians in the Attic, or the Belfry. For us, the paragraph "In fig. 13, since a R is by construction parallel to A B in fig. 12, and T V is by construction in Problem III also parallel to A B— \therefore a R is parallel to T V, \therefore a b R and T b V are alternate triangles, \therefore a R : T V :: a b : b V" (from *The Elements of Perspective* (1859)) is the most beautiful in the whole of the works of Ruskin, and the inner compulsion of our artistic urge is as good as anything you will find among those boys on the second floor.

R. M.

Civil Service Statistics

A Dog-Day Dream

OUR masters struggle to decide
Our worth by systems that divide
"Results achieved" by "time devoted."
But when this process is applied
And on the form "results" are noted
As "nil" or "unidentified,"
Why—then we get promoted!



"I told you not even the C.O. himself must smoke here—now we have no ammunition dump AND no C.O."

Concerts

IT has been a matter of growing surprise lately that, to state it plainly, people do not mind going to concerts so much as it might be reasonable to suppose they might. This may be a blind to create even more concert-goers, because there is nothing human nature likes more than adding to any growing surprise about itself; but it may be something subtler. Some psychologists hold that people writing surprised articles in the papers about more and more people going to concerts have been in their time to the sort of concert which the thought of anyone else wanting to go to makes them surprised at anyone wanting to go to any concert. However that may be, the fact that psychologists think this sort of thing rather proves something or other about concerts—if only the fact that some of the chairs are a bit harder than others.

A concert is held, as often as not, in a concert-hall; and a concert-hall, as often as not, is pale green wherever it has the chance, with curly gilding here and there. There is a reason. It puts the music-lover (as the concert-goer is called) in the right frame of mind, because pale green with curly gilding is both very ugly and very aesthetic, thus pleasing everyone, however cynical. Concert-goers, as they themselves would be the first to admit, are a bit cynical because they are cultured. They ventilate this cynicism before a concert begins by glancing round at any strangers within range and wondering why they are there. This feeling of wonderment reaches its pitch when two strangers are sitting side by side, because one stranger will wonder passionately why the other stranger is there—whether the whole thing is a pose or whether the other stranger looks like that because of being a music-lover—and it is only psychology to assume (without, of course, believing it) that the other stranger is thinking the same. This antagonism between neighbouring strangers will persist through a whole concert, however either stranger behaves; unless one stranger lends the other a programme, when the antagonism will change to a sort of rivalry of enthusiasm which is not much better. All this, psychologists insist, would not happen if concert-goers were not cultured. They even go so far as to suggest that some concert-goers are not so cultured as they make out, citing the undeniable truth that very few latecomers to a concert, the sort who arrive when the hall is nearly full and the orchestra tuning up, can enter the hall without a sudden sensation of animal excitement which is nothing more or less than their subconsciouses thinking they have got into a swimming-bath. I should add that the fact that large concert audiences make almost as much noise as people in a swimming-bath has two main explanations; one that mass culture tends to make people exaggerate themselves, and another that there is so little chance of saying anything when once a concert is under way that an audience must take its chances while it can.

The behaviour of the average concert audience when once a concert is under way has often been a subject of comment, those people who sway from side to side or beat time getting the most publicity. But I have never thought that enough justice has been done to a far bigger section of an audience—the people who follow in the programme. These people are at their most noticeable with the detailed sort of programme which quotes bars of the music from time to time. This sort of programme puts a bit of a mental load on an audience, because at a certain juncture in the music it must turn the page or lose its status with its neighbours. Thus an audience tends to divide itself

into the confident, the struggling but independent, and the mere sycophants who turn a page whenever they notice that their neighbour is a page further on than they are. The independent sort are rather prone to turn their pages before they should, and to have to look as if they had gone on ahead on purpose. All this mental interplay, coupled with the fact that concert audiences are meant to wait for a loud bit of music before they can decently turn the page, imposes an emotional strain which, psychologists think, accounts in part for the applause at the end of an item. It is not, psychologists emphasize, that they don't think concert-goers enjoy the music they are applauding; it's just that they have to think of a better psychological reason than humanity's sheer pleasure in making a noise.

People leaving a concert-hall after a concert have a few invariable characteristics which I must mention. They divide into three main classes: those who are alone; those who are with other people but insist on looking rapt, though not so rapt as to be drawn into conversation by the others; and those who have got drawn into conversation and are having to tell one another how much they enjoyed it. On the whole, psychologists say, none of these classes is quite satisfied, because the people who are alone feel vaguely the lack of someone not to talk to just as much as the people not alone. It is all rather a tangle, and again, psychologists say, is the direct result of culture.

I want now to say a few words about concerts on the wireless. These, when they happen, are not always so much the direct result of culture as of someone having turned the wireless on. They are apt to take place in the last ten minutes before the nine o'clock news, and will therefore go on not long enough for some people and too long for the rest. There is therefore something of a subdued conflict among such an audience even after it has established among itself whether the wireless is on too loud or not loud enough and has opened the door to let the dog either in or out. This subdued conflict is seen as much as felt, because the people known to be enjoying it really flat out do not look so happy as the people not enjoying it really flat out. They are apt to stiffen very slightly all over and gaze rather fixedly at nothing.

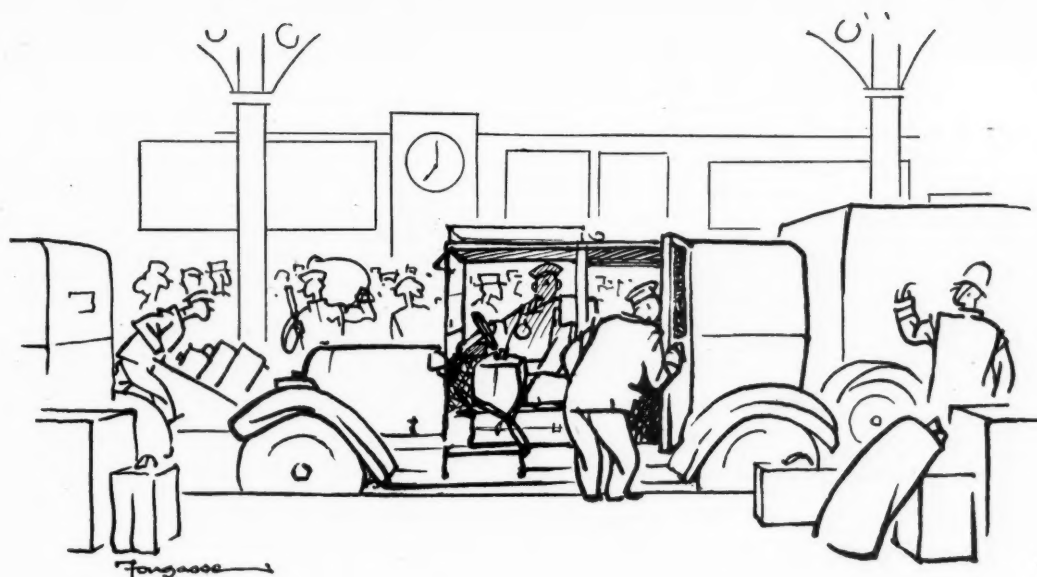
Some concerts on the wireless, of course, start at the beginning and go through to the end. An average of intensity is struck among the listeners by some implicit agreement which lays down that they shall listen like mad for the first ten minutes, talk only when they need to for the next ten, and then just talk. It is interesting, psychologists say, that wireless listeners do not want to applaud anything however much they have enjoyed it, and are indeed mildly annoyed by the applause from the concert-hall itself; and this, psychologists say, only goes to prove.

Definitely

"Sir,—At the special meeting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh last Friday to celebrate the quatercentenary of Copernicus, who definitely put the sun and the earth in their relative proper places . . ."—*Letter to "The Scotsman."*

Non-Sequitur Corner

"This concert is not coming from a studio, but, as you have probably guessed by the applause, from the Town Hall at Kidderminster."—*Radio Announcement.*



"Where for, Sir? . . . and what train, Sir? . . . and what day, Sir?"

Guards

"I THINK," said the Major irritably, "that we ought to try to do something about the Camp Guard. It is not all I could desire. This morning they let through a couple of extremely low-class Egyptians, who wanted to sell leather wallets with zip-fasteners to the men; and then when the Garrison Engineer came they drove him away at the point of the bayonet."

Lieutenant Sympson said that it was the sort of thing he had often felt like doing to Garrison Engineers himself. But Major Fibbing said that this was not the point. There was a principle involved. Also, the low-class Egyptians had sold him (the Major) one of the leather wallets with zip-fasteners, and he had put all his money into it, and had been unable to get it out again owing to a failure of the mechanism.

Up till this time our Camp Guard had been rather a happy-go-lucky affair. The C.S.M. had reserved all the worst and stupidest men in the Company for it, with the addition of such as were more or less half-maimed and blind. The Kugombas vary a good deal: some of them make fine soldiers, but others do not. The latter sort are the ones we have usually put on the Camp Guard.

"But if the Major wants a really good guard, bless his heart," said the C.S.M., "he shall have one, and I will recall Sergeant Petero to take charge of it. I will produce a first-class guard that will remind the Major of the old days in the last war when he was with the Loamshire Fusiliers."

So one of our best sergeants was recalled from his post, and the odd collection of incompetents who had hitherto formed our Camp Guard were replaced by picked men, and after a little intensive training the Camp Guard became quite stylish.

"It's the best African guard in the Middle East," said the Major proudly, after inspecting them one morning. "I wish the Brigadier would pay us a visit. It would open his eyes."

That night the Major happened to be in Cairo, and he dropped into Poll's Cabaret for an hour. The Major says that cabarets, personally, leave him cold, but that he feels it a duty when in Egypt to do as the Egyptian does, so he goes to Poll's Cabaret occasionally. Strangely enough our Colonel, who has an equally keen sense of duty, was also there.

"I must pop over and see you soon," said the Colonel. So of course the Major told him about the wonderful

Camp Guard, and what could be done with Kugombas if you really knew how to manage them. The Colonel said he would pay a surprise visit next morning at eight o'clock sharp, and would try to bring the Brigadier with him.

The Major was rather late getting back to camp, and Captain Hollyhock and Sympson and I had all gone to bed, so we knew nothing about the impending visit; and I still hold that our action, when the Garrison Adjutant asked us for a dozen really smart men under a native sergeant to help in a gas demonstration, was perfectly correct. We lent him the Camp Guard, and packed them off in a lorry. We did not of course leave the entrance to the camp unguarded, but told some men in overalls who were cleaning up near the cookhouse to keep an eye on it until the guard came back an hour later. Captain Hollyhock even went so far as to tell one of them to stand in the sentry-box.

For once in his life the Major overslept himself, and emerged from his tent just in time to see the Brigadier and the Colonel being greeted by an impromptu salute, the man in the box, in the excitement of the moment, having sloped his broom instead of presenting it.



"Calling C for Charlie. Calling C for Charlie.
All right—sulk if you want to. Sulk if you want to."

The Phoney Phleet

XXIX—H.M.S. "Double Face"

THOUGH, generally speaking, nice
Lieutenant Heep estranged his pals
Because he formed the loathsome vice
Of sucking up to Admirals.

In port he'd always stay on board
Dressed up in case some Sea Lord came
And, if one did, he'd wear a sword
And, probably, white gloves with same.

He offered wine and costly buns;
He listened to their past careers;
And when they left he banged off guns
And made his ratings give three cheers.

This constant toadying to nob
Worked wonders, I regret to say;
His ship escaped all dirty jobs
And Heep got leave and extra pay.

But every Sin involves a Fall,
And so it happened in *this* case.
The Foremost Sea Lord of them all
Called on his ship, the *Double Face*.

Heep carried through his usual drill
But when he got to buns, "I wish
No part of these, they make me ill;
Bring me," the Great One said, "some fish."

This quite original request
Made Heep hinge slightly at the knees.
He took it as a subtle test
Of his ability to please.

Forlorn inspection of the fridge
Revealed no foodstuff with a fin;
He staggered blindly to the bridge
And shouted "Heave a depth-charge in!"

A battleship or two went down;
The *Double Face* was blown on shore;
Some public buildings in the town
Collapsed; but really nothing more.

It seemed to me a bit severe
When, later, Heep was shot at dawn,
But there you are, the moral's clear—
Be nice to people *but don't fawn*.

o o

H. J. Talking

EVERY year I summon my clan and give them an oration and a reinforced tea. Thirty-five minutes are allowed for unrestricted eating and then, while I address them, only edibles capable of silent mastication are issued. Many present try unobtrusively to fill their pockets with the good things provided, some going so far as to have them lined with mackintosh so that jellies and other damp foods can be dealt with. I take a good deal of trouble over my speech, which is intended to bind them closer together and at the same time improve them, their morals tending to be slovenly. This time I said as follows:

"Kith and kin, it gratifies me to see you sit groaning round my board and to know that even the most improvident for once has had a square and, to you, inexpensive meal. If you worked harder you would be able to invite me back, should that occur to you, and would also be able to give presents at Christmas instead of merely sending postcards. Other advantages of hard work are that it leaves less time for drink, gambling, and such low pleasures, reconciles one to death, and leads to the approbation, if not of your friends, at least of those who would otherwise have to do it themselves.

"Now I turn to the arts. What about music? Do you know any?—probably not, apart from dance tunes and escapist melodies played on a bent saw. Good music is much longer than the trash you no doubt wallow in, and one follows it with a score. Loving the arts is a duty you owe to society, like paying rates or not letting your chimney get on fire. In literature, poetry is what you ought to read, especially poetry by those who have not written much before. Reading the later works of poets is apt to show you have got into a rut. So much for hard work and art.

"There is another thing I must speak to you about—courtesy. This may lead to all sorts of things. If your neighbour is in trouble with his macaroni do not just ignore him; help him to pack in the strands, taking care to not get them involved with yours. Again, when people



"Not like that, dear—in small pieces."

ask after your health do not just reply 'So, so,' as tantalizing and rebuffing are what such answers are. Think up some good, rare illness which will really interest them. I usually say I have Van Doom's disease and then continue about how they used Siberian leeches and how it needs a skilled flute-player to get them off.

"Some of you may be wondering whether you will be asked next year. I cannot bind myself in advance, but probably the list of invitations will be much the same. This is the end of the speech. Those wishing to applaud will now have an opportunity so to do."

One of the most obtrusive guests is Sir P. Knight, Kt. He has a noisy manner which many do not care for, even when he has explained that it hides a heart of gold. He annoys my wife by being gay at the wrong moments. When she offers him with her own hands a bun with a good large filling of chopped parsley, instead of taking it quietly and getting on with it he bursts into loud guffaws and lets off indoor fireworks on his plate. He often produces a set piece, which is usually in a number of sections, and sometimes he assembles them in the wrong order, causing most unfortunate messages to be displayed, and nothing will put them out, not even tea.

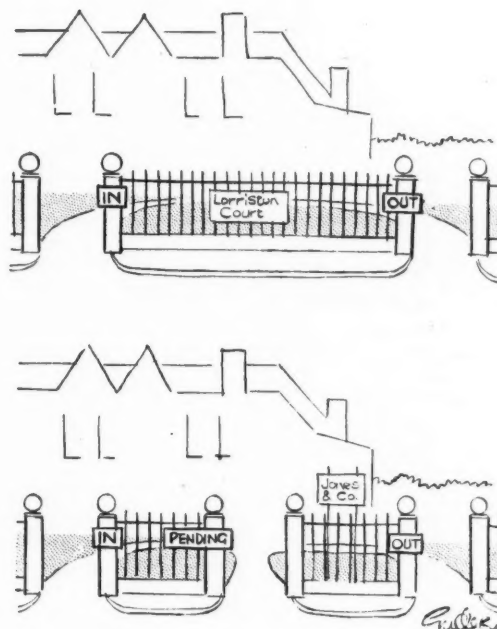
He became a Sir because he invented a method of making rayon from silk, but as a youth he lived with confidence tricksters and forgers, whom he dropped when he went up in the world; after that he rarely entered the Thieves' Kitchen, and when he did he was standoffish and obviously despised their cooking. He would have his chauffeur bring in a luncheon-basket and stand there eating devilled kidneys

and plovers' eggs while the thieves pretended that their old accustomed fare was quite good enough for them.

Sir P. Knight, Kt., is chairman of a Memorial House which stands on the site of a field near where Hoccleve possibly lived, and he is very active in this, always writing letters to the papers about it and presiding at meetings against garages being built anywhere near. It is a small modern villa with bands of yellow tiles across the brickwork, and it is called "Heerz Mudin Urai." Inside there are suites of furniture, the instalments on which have been taken over from the previous owners, and an edition of Hoccleve in a glass-fronted safe. A society which believes that Hoccleve was really Lydgate keeps a sandwich-man permanently outside the gate wearing the arguments for their view, but as they are rather long he has to have several boards slung on him and when he sees anyone reading them he gives them what he considers enough time to finish the side and then briskly changes over, retaining the spectator's attention meanwhile by a neat little tap-dance.

Another public character among my guests is Agatha La Superbe, a veteran potter whose sherds are highly thought of by the British Museum, she having the knack of making them Roman, Anglo-Saxon or anything you like. An archæologist jilted her in the remote past and she goes secretly to excavations to drop confusing fragments into them.

Much of her time is given to a campaign for cleaning up Bowls, as she thinks it is a wrong and evil thing that players with long arms should compete unhandicapped against those whose arms are short. She frequently makes public protests, but since these consist of hunger-strikes the average match is not long enough for what she is doing to sink in, and so far she has made little headway, even those she champions disliking her assistance and preferring that their measurements should not be bandied about by one and all.



The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.



PLAYING WITH FIRE

Hannibal (and the Alps) Outclassed

IF we'd made it a Stay-at-Home holiday, mother, this could never have happened. Still, there it is. If you're sure you're all right you'd better just hold my knitting and the book and the little blue rug, and I'll leave the basket on the seat and just go along the corridor and see what's happened to them. Sure you're all right? No, you needn't stir. I'll just put the things on top of you, and you can go on holding your tweed coat and the lunch and your own rug. You're sure you actually *saw* them get into the train?

Well, if you did you did, but I can't say I did, but I suppose they did; and certainly it wouldn't be *like* her to get left behind on the platform. But I think, if you're certain you're all right, mother, I'll just fight my way along and try to make sure that she and the child did get in, even if they couldn't get seats. . . .

I'm sorry to disturb you, but if I could just get out . . . thank you. . . . I'm sorry . . . could I just If I could just get past . . . I'm so sorry, but my friend and her little girl ought to be somewhere on this train, and I thought perhaps I could just work my way along and have a look at them. . . .

I'm so sorry . . . My friend and her little girl ought to be somewhere on the train unless they got left behind in the scramble. . . . I quite agree, a needle in a bundle of hay—or I suppose you might say *two* needles. I'm so sorry . . . no, please don't wake him up, I'm sure I can step over him quite easily. . . . Oh dear, I didn't see it was a basket. . . . No, I'm not hurt, thank you, but your eggs had a narrow squeak, I'm afraid. . . .

If you wouldn't terribly mind standing in that doorway I think I could squeeze past without making that lady get up off her suitcase or getting spiked by the helmets and packs and things that those unfortunate soldiers are wearing. . . . I'm so sorry, but the fact is that my friend and her little girl somehow got separated from my mother and me in the crowd, and my mother's over eighty, so naturally she worries . . . Thank you very much. No, really, it's quite all right, it wasn't anywhere near my eye, and nobody could possibly help it, with the corridor jammed like this. Yes, travelling is a bit of a problem in war-time. I'm really only worried about my girl and her little friend—my little friend and her girl—MY FRIEND AND HER LITTLE

GIRL. I want to make sure they got on the train and weren't left behind, as they easily *may* have been. . . .

I'm so sorry . . . would you mind if I squeezed into your carriage just for one second while the ticket-collector goes by? . . .

Oh, my ticket. . . . Well, I'll do

SOCKS

"DEAR MR. PUNCH,—It may comfort you to know that my favourite pair of socks bears the cheery label of your Comforts Fund.

These socks were given to me in the beginning of the war and served through the Flanders campaign and more than twelve months of trapesing across deserts in the Middle East. The wool is matted and apparently quite hole-proof, in fact I feel that a testimonial parodying the old Pears Soap tramp advertisement is their just due—something on the lines of 'since then I have worn no other.'

Thank you, Mr. Punch."

(Signed) G. W. A., *Capt.*

In answer to a request for permission to publish the above we received the following:

"As the Duke of Wellington would say:—

'Publish and be blessed.'"

Donations will be most gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie St., London, E.C.4.

what I can if you can take the other people's first, only it's very difficult to move, and besides, I think my mother may have my ticket. She's got a seat in quite another carriage, several coaches back. . . . I'm really looking for my friend and her little girl who ought to have got on with us, but we got separated in the crowd. Still, they may be further down the train if I can only . . . Well, if I can't go no further this end—I mean, if you say the door is locked and that's the end of the train, of course I'd better start on my way back to the carriage where I left my mother. . . . I'm so sorry . . . I beg your pardon . . .

All right, mother. *Don't* worry. Just sit there and hold the things. I haven't found them yet, but I'm going to work my way up to the *other* end of the train now. E. M. D.

Global Strategy

WHEN I asked young Podgy McSump what he had been doing he scowled at me and answered rudely, "It's none o' your business."

"All right," I said, "if you are going to be a bad boy you needn't stay in my house. I believe you've been fighting."

"Well, I was not fightin'," still scowling. "Because it was wrestlin'."

"And who were you wrestling?"

"Sam Doops."

"Ah. And I suppose you were beaten again?"

"He's just a dirty wee sniffer," bitterly.

"Well, I've told you before, you must accept the fact that Sam Doops is the better man and—and behave yourself."

"But I'll beat him yet. An' then," violently, "I'll just—just bash him to bits."

"Besides I had something very interesting to show you."

"Whit was it?" suspiciously.

"It's a model of the world, and it shows you how the world goes round."

"But it does not," looking incredulous. "Because this is the world we're at the noo. Because it's the world we're stayin' at."

"I'll show you."

I produced my small terrestrial globe and placed it on the table.

"Now there you are, and," rotating the globe, "that is how it goes round."

"An' does the right world go round like that?"

"Yes, and here is something else. If you were to dig a hole there, where we are just now, right through the world, and went down the hole—you would come out at Australia."

"But somebody would need to catch me at Australia because I would fall off the world."

"Well, you see—"

"Could ma mither write to ma Uncle Peter and he could be waitin' for me?"

"That would be a good idea."

"But hoo would I get hame from Australia back up the hole?"

"And now," I said brightly, "I'm going to show you how you would go round the world."

"Round the world?" exclaimed



"And if this doesn't turn him into a toad, then I shall really have to consider changing my retailer."

Podgy, his interest now thoroughly aroused.

"You would start here and you would go like this," tracing a route with my pencil. "And away round here. And come back like that. And then you would have been right round the world."

"Would I just go out the front door an' come hame at the back door?"

"Yes. But of course you would have to go in a ship."

"Tell me about it," commanded Podgy.

"Well, here in the harbour a big ship is getting ready to sail and—"

"I'm to be the captain."

"With your captain's hat on you mount the bridge and order full steam ahead."

"An' would I say 'Port yer helm'?"

"Yes, and the ship would glide out of the harbour, the captain waving farewell to his father and mother."

"An' would Sam Doops be there?"

"Perhaps. But of course," I added hastily, "you will have no time for fighting Sam Doops."

"No," said Podgy, "I would just put ma fingers to ma nose at him."

"And so, her graceful stem cutting through the waves, the gallant vessel—"

"An' Sam Doops'll no' ken I'm comin' back round the world the other road."

"He'll get a surprise. And now you are steering your way across the Atlantic, heading for America."

"But I'm no' wantin' to go to America," protested Podgy. "I'm wantin' to get hame from round the world as quick as I can."

"Ay, ay, sir, port it is." That, I explained, "is what the man at the wheel would say. And you shape a course down here for the Panama Canal."

"An' the boat'll be sailin' quicker because it's goin' doon the world noo."

"Passing through the wonderful Panama Canal, Captain McSumph decides to make for China."

"Weel, I do not," said Podgy. "Because I just want to go right hame in ma big quick boat."

"But you've often told me you wanted to go to China."

"But I'll see China the next time

I go round the world. This time I'm in a hurry."

"Very well, the captain's word is law. Heading westward," I went on to relate, "and gathering tremendous speed, our noble craft skims over the waves like a great bird."

"An' it's got four chimneys an' they're a' smokin'."

"And at length, on a beautiful Saturday afternoon, Captain McSumph's stout ship docks in the harbour of Auchterbrose, having made a record passage round the world."

"An' then I get doon aff ma boat."

"And your father and mother are there to welcome you."

"But Sam Doops is no' to get seein' me yet."

"He will be jealous of you now."

"But he'll be lookin' oot for me comin' hame the same road I went awa'. Because he'll no' ken I was round the world."

"And won't he get a surprise!"

"Ay," said Podgy grimly. "Because I'll come slinkin' up behind him before he sees me an' I'll bash his heid aff." D.



"I expect Mr. Bradfield will be a little late this morning—his bicycle has a slow puncture."

Road Sense

UNTIL I met Amphetlett I thought I was unique. My journeys to and from the office take me through one of the most delightful stretches of Britain's countryside, but I seldom look at it. It may be that my soul (like Amphetlett's) has been destroyed by long years in the hurly-burly of commerce. Perhaps I am neurotic—a mere bundle of competitive nerve-endings struggling in an acquisitive society. It may be, on the other hand, that I am typically English.

My behaviour on my bicycle epitomizes all that is traditional. The tendency to flirt with fate, the inordinate fondness for games of chance and patience, the stoicism—all these are represented. The moment I am released from the office I mount my cycle and I am away into the most interesting of my private worlds.

The first half-mile of my homeward journey is a rather uneventful overture. I carry two lists of figures in my head—the number of cars that pass me

before I reach the cross-roads and the number of times I must raise my hat. I see no hope of beating my figures for August 1939 in the first category, while the second lacks the finer subtleties of statistical inquiry.

Just beyond the cross-roads the road falls rather sharply and provides an opportunity to free-wheel. As soon as my cycle breaks an imaginary line between the willow-tree and the telegraph-pole I shut my eyes and count. I have improved enormously in recent months. The marked tendency to veer inwards to the ditch has been corrected and I have reduced the frequency of spills to one in eight. I doubt whether any man in England could better my performance of December 14th, when I rode blind for nine seconds and paved the way for a renewal of the Eighth Army's advance into Tripolitania. Many people deny the possibility of intuitive vision. I am not prepared to debate the matter. What I *know* is that on that glorious day an inner voice told me what my performance might mean. "Nine seconds," it said, "and you ensure an African success: less—and a counter-attack by Rommel is probable."

From the bottom of the declivity to Marsden's rick the road meanders intricately with the stream. If I follow the meanders conventionally I traverse the course in one hundred and sixty-seven revolutions of my pedals. If I travel by straight lines in a series of surveyor's sights from one bend to the next, I can reduce the figure to one hundred and fifty-three. That is my standard. There is another pair of white gloves for the R.A.F. every time I make it.

Naturally, I do not indulge in these diversions when there is wheeled competition on the road. It is a point of honour with me to pass every cyclist other than young men on models with dropped handlebars, and schoolboys.

Elderly male and all female cyclists are always fair game. But there is no sense merely in overtaking for its own sake. To obtain good results the overtaking must occur before a fixed landmark is reached. Momentous events may hang upon the success or failure of an overtaking mission. On the day that I failed by three yards to pass a fast-moving clergyman the Russians retired from Rostov-on-Don. I shall never forget it.

One day while engaged in operation three—riding on the white line to test the strength of the Japanese positions in New Guinea—I saw a cyclist ahead of me who appeared to be in difficulties. It was an old man with a beard and a Norfolk jacket. His left leg hung limp

and useless while his right worked desperately to keep the cycle in motion. It was a pitiful sight. Then as I approached a strange thing happened. The right leg suddenly became inert and the left took over the task of propulsion. I was so intrigued by this manoeuvre that I drew alongside and asked whether I could be of assistance.

"No, thank you," chuckled the old man, "there's nothing wrong. I usually manage this hill on one leg."

There was just a trace of superiority in his voice—enough to make my left leg hang loose from the hip while my right pushed hard at its pedal. Together we struggled over the rise.

From that chance meeting a deep and lasting friendship developed. Amphlett introduced me to many interesting stratagems and in return I shared with him my treasured accumulation of road-lore. It is a great joy to be in Amphlett's company. He is an unfailing source of inspiration. Still, for all his zest and skill he remains only a trick-cyclist. Of the deeper significance of our diversions he has, I am sure, no inkling. He is quite incapable of realizing the connection between (say) our failure to reach the "Dead Slow" sign after free-wheeling from a standing start at Croft's brickyard and the success of a German counter-blow at Kharkov.

Perhaps, after all, I *am* unique.

My Lady of Shallot

I WROTE her in poetic phrase,
Confessed my love and sang her
praise

And begged that she might spend with
me

All of her earthly hours;
In passion true compared her to
My garden's choicest flowers.

"Your skin is lily-white" (I said);
"Your lips are like a rosebud red;
With eyes as blue as gentian's hue
How beautiful your gaze is!
Your lovely locks as sweet as stocks,
And brighter than the daisies!"

My love made cold reply that she
Preferred to Dig For Victory;
She could not plan to wed a man
With *flowers* in his garden.
To blooms like these instead of peas
She feared her heart must harden.

Then in my bitterness I rose
And set to work with spades and hoes
And wheeled away my fine display
Of flowers in a barrow,
And planted greens and runner beans
And vegetable marrow.

And then I wrote my love again
A very different refrain;
I said her cheeks were pale as leeks,
Her nose just like that sweet root
The swede; her hair I did compare
In colour to a beetroot.

Her lips reminded me (wrote I)
Of purple-sprouting broccoli;
Her dainty feet were small and
neat
As turnips (Mammoth Early);
Her legs as frail as leaves of kale
And many times as curly.

Thus for a second time I sent
To her, and feared she might resent
The novel ways in which her praise
Was sung, and think me caddish. . . .

* * * * *

Our honeymoon was spent in June
In planting out some radish.

o o

"BOYS DOWN MINES MAY
BE DROPPED."
Heading in Daily Express.

Ja? Ach!



At the Play

"PINK STRING AND SEALING WAX"

(DUKE OF YORK'S)

"FLYING COLOURS" (LYRIC)

HERE is a pleasurable new play at last! Mr. ROLAND PERTWEE is an expert hand with a complicated crime-story, and his latest such story for the theatre, *Pink String and Sealing Wax*, is surely the most ingenious thing he has ever provided. We are in the 'eighties—which can usually be relied upon to give us a good, rip-roaring, Jack-the-Ripperish time in the theatre. And we are at Brighton and in the back-shop-cum-sitting-room of an analytical-cum-pharmaceutical chemist. This (Mr. DAVID HORNE) is a tyrannical one-track-minded father with strange little lapses into sympathy and kindness. His wife (Miss IRIS HOEY) is a literal-minded noodle turned, by the actress, into an adorable mixture of grace and silliness. Their son (Mr. PHILIP FRIEND) is supposed to follow in the footsteps of his father professionally, but shows preference to be an inventor. The three daughters of Mr. *Strachan* (two unspecified juniors are upstairs in bed with chicken-pox and so remain unseen) are *Emily*, *Jessie* and *Eva*. *Emily* (Miss DOROTHY HYSON) has a voice and aches to sing in grand opera. *Jessie* (Miss AUDREY HESKETH) aspires to heights of tragic acting and strews her bewildered mother's carpet with *Ophelia's* imaginary blossoms. *Eva*

(Miss MARGARET BARTON) is an imp of a schoolgirl—delectably drawn and delectably acted—who can topple from bliss to misery in a split second, or soar from despair to ecstasy at the mere suggestion of a walk on the pier or an unexpected sixpence.

A very great deal happens within the four April days of the play's action—perhaps even a shade too much for total probability. *Emily*, for example, steals away clandestinely to hear Patti sing at the Pavilion, gazes at the diva emerging from the artists' door after the concert, sings to her a stave or two of Marguerite's "Jewel Song," and is promptly picked up and taken to supper by the great little soprano herself. "Lobster pâté with Adelina Patti!" says *Emily* to a gaping family which is as stunned as we are. The singer, moreover, offers *Emily* an interview and some singing-lessons under her own master. Mr. *Strachan* will not hear of such goings-on and his refusal nearly breaks *Emily's* heart. (The one tiny fault in Mr. WILLIAM ARMSTRONG's lively and most adroit production is in his allowing Miss HYSON to sing a stave or two of her Gounod on the stage. This taste of coloratura is pretty enough, but hardly such as would make a supper-bound Patti hesitate to step into her brougham.)

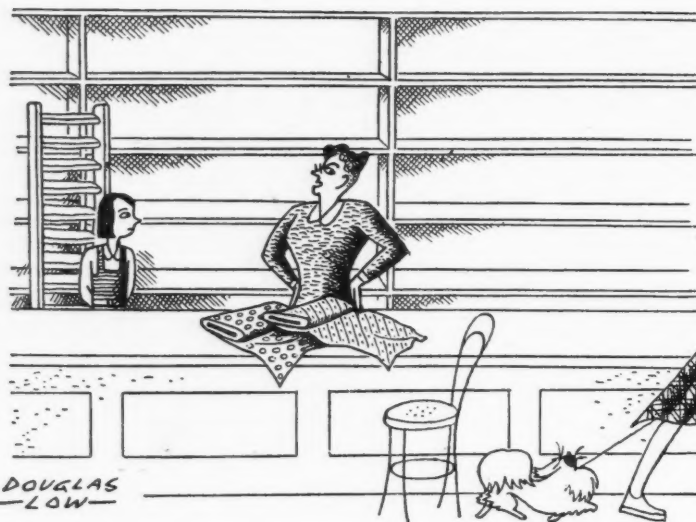
But *Emily's* adventure is nothing to her brother *Albert's*. He had inadvertently conceived a boyish passion for *Pearl Bond*, a bullying barman's deplorable wife (Miss SHELAGH FURLEY). At dead of night he asks the

demirep into his father's house, and while his back is turned she steals enough strychnine to poison half of Hove and then borrows a helpful biography of William Palmer, the Rugeley poisoner. *Bully Bond* promptly dies, and Mr. *Strachan* is called to the inquest. *Pearl*, having accomplished murder, turns to blackmail and is very neatly thwarted by *Strachan père* in a way which playgoers must see for themselves. The delectable *Eva's* share in all these happenings? She rifles money-boxes to secure a return ticket to London for her operatic big sister. She discovers the unhappy passion of *Albert*, who till then had been "my hero," and goes into disturbing sulks with him for two days and a half. She sees—and this is her whoppingest share in the excitement—*Pearl* helping herself to the strychnine, for *Eva* had been surprised giving midnight lettuces to her father's experimental caviar and had consequently hid in the shop's darkness in her nightgown.

Yes, perhaps too many loose ends are too neatly tied in the last half-hour. But what matters most in a play of this sort is that we should find ourselves discussing nothing else but the play in the interval, and positively jostling other discussers in our eagerness to get back to the auditorium before the next curtain-rise. That is the true test of your good melodrama. Mr. PERTWEE's play fulfils it capitably.

Years hence when we come to review the revues that cheered London in the black nights of the Greatest War we shall pick out *Flying Colours* at the Lyric with a remark something as follows: "Oh, yes! That was the one in which BINNIE HALE sang 'Rule, Britannia!' in the guise of Lady Hamilton on board the *Victory*!" Miss HALE does this sincerely and seriously, Lord Nelson makes a noble speech in acknowledgment, the King and Queen of Naples purr with royal appreciation, and Mr. DOUGLAS BYNG disguised as Sir William Hamilton looks on in silent solemnity. This is not a skit. It is played seriously and received so, and it has been conceived and devised by Mr. ERIC MASCHWITZ. Elsewhere the reins are slackened for Mr. BYNG in a Rabelaisian sketch of the Empress Poppæa enjoying a Roman holiday, for Miss HALE in a solo opportunity to play certain radio and musical-comedy ladies with merciless mimicry, and for both artists together in one or two sketches which without them would be inconceivably unfunny and with them are reasonably amusing.

A. D.



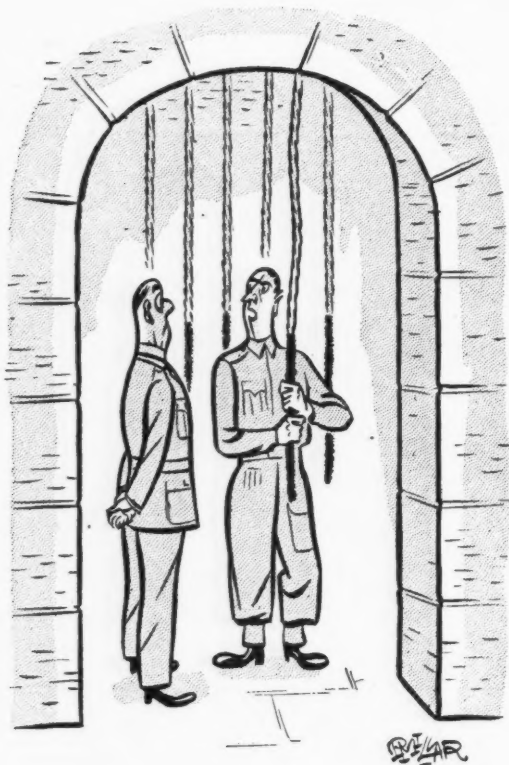
DOUGLAS
—LOW—

"... makes us haul down the entire stock, and then buys nothing."



William Seely

"Where's the switch for that light?"



"It just seemed odd, Sir, employing a batman in the belfry."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Queen Elizabeth

IN spite of its Catholic bias this book (*Queen Elizabeth*, by THEODORE MAYNARD. HOLLIS AND CARTER, 18/-) is in the main sympathetic and fair to its subject. Unlike Hilaire Belloc, who puts Burleigh forward as the master of Elizabethan England and treats Elizabeth as a vacillating unbalanced woman, the pawn of her cold and calculating first minister, Mr. MAYNARD regards her as perhaps the most brilliantly successful ruler in history, and her parsimony and hesitation as hardly less useful qualities than her complete lack of principle. Only over Mary, Queen of Scots, does Mr. MAYNARD lose his sense of reality and proportion. He speaks of the gradual and remorseless preparation for the killing of Mary, denies that Elizabeth had any right to try a sister queen, and says that she sacrificed her honour when she consented to Mary's death. Of anything that can reasonably be called honour there was so little in any of the persons concerned that whether it was in any particular instance sacrificed or retained is scarcely worth discussing. The point at issue is whether Elizabeth's security demanded Mary's execution; and inasmuch as Mary, whose captivity, Mr. MAYNARD admits, was not at all rigorous, had for years been intriguing against Elizabeth, not only with France and Spain, but

with most of Elizabeth's ministers, from Burleigh and Walsingham downwards, it is not surprising that Elizabeth's apprehensions at last outweighed her reluctance to execute a fellow monarch. This lapse apart, Mr. MAYNARD brings out not only Elizabeth's great qualities as a ruler but also her personal tragedy, which began when she was still a baby with the execution of her mother and ended only with her death. In his treatment of the chief figures of her reign Mr. MAYNARD is less sympathetic. This is understandable where the courtiers and politicians are concerned, but when he sums up Drake and Hawkins as "no better than commonplace thieves" his tenderness for what the Spaniards suffered at the hands of these Protestant heroes carries him rather far. One looks in vain for any moral obliquity in Mr. MAYNARD's Spaniards, who bear a close resemblance to the Elizabethans as pictured by English historians in the nineteenth century. Naturally humane, they are opposed to the trade in negro slaves. Courageous, they put up a stout fight when their Armada meets the superior naval forces of the English. Honest to the verge of thick-wittedness, they blunder irreparably in their struggle to save England for Catholicism. H. K.

Omar's Chequerboard

That great storehouse of mediæval romance, the clash of Moslem and Christian in the Orient, having tempted both Scott and Maurice Hewlett, who approached it from the West, now engrosses Mr. HAROLD LAMB, arriving from the East. *Persian Mosaic* (HALE, 12/6) brings to the life of Omar Khayyâm—which, his poems apart, actually amounts to one stable date, one ascertained job and one well-authenticated tomb—a brilliant and engrossing reality. Its tesserae are a series of stirring episodes in the immemorial Sindbad-the-Sailor style. Astronomer and poet, lover of girls as fair and flimsy as jessamine flowers, Omar emerges from the Nisapur of his boyhood to capture at twenty-one the confidence of a sultan of twenty. While enjoying the ups and downs of court favour he is sought out by the notorious "Lord of the Assassins" and offered power and place in a scientific hierarchy which is to rule mankind behind a façade of popular religion. The poet in him revolts, and he escapes every attempt to enmesh him in the pattern of his times. Yet so vividly is that pattern conveyed that the status of the rebel who stood out against it is both substantiated and enhanced and its wedding of scholarship and imagination abundantly justified. H. P. E.

A Warning to Cake-Eaters

MR. GRAHAM GREENE calls his new novel, *The Ministry of Fear* (HEINEMANN, 8/6), "an entertainment," and it is certainly that, in a rather grim way. He writes well, and the book is very readable; but it is slightly uncomfortable reading because, emerging now and then from the anaesthetic Mr. GREENE so skilfully administers, you wonder if too big a fuss is not being made about too little. Everything fits beautifully together, there are enough conceits and twists here for three thrillers, but somehow they do more credit to the ingenuity of their author than to the good sense of the secret agents who employ them. It would have been easier for these—and safer, I felt—to do things a bit more simply. Would you, for instance, if you wished to pass the microfilm negative of stolen plans from hand to hand as a preliminary to getting it out to an enemy country, specially organize a charity fête at which, lurking in a prize cake, it would be handed to a complete stranger who happened to use the right phrase to the veiled lady in the tent? I hardly think so. E. O. D. K.

A Young Spaniard

If you wish to know Spain, not just the facts about it, then Mr. ARTURO BAREA's continuation of what he began in *The Forge* is the book for you. The mere facts in it are few and not necessarily unfamiliar: only bear in mind that speculation prevails to such an extent in all the Spanish services, both civil and military, as to be counted a normal economic factor. The value, indeed the very beauty of *The Track* (FABER, 10/6) is not in recording trite generalizations. Instead, Spain appears in it with stereoscopic sharpness. As autobiography it is the most selfless imaginable: what happens to the author interests him only as it shows what happens to his country. His present instalment covers his military service in Morocco (where a Major Franco was already distinguishing himself from his fellow-officers) and his return to find a living in a land without opportunity. Speculation, corruption, privilege, illegitimate control were in command. For the smallest literary future one must fawn and flatter and belong to a "group"; as for the humblest future in an office, one had to endure all manner of economic caprices on a wage so meagre that saving, and so forearming oneself, was impossible. Every door was shut, except at a prohibitive cost of money or honour or independence. Such heart-breaking but dusty conclusions count less in Mr. BAREA's book than the men he meets and, paradoxically, the author. His passionate curiosity about other men has the effect, not uncommon in literature, of making himself real, personal, and clear. To read this lean, virile and nervous book is to borrow Mr. BAREA's eyes and have his experiences—in fact to live for a time in Spain before the Civil War.

J. S.

Russian Parnassus

There can be nothing absolutely forlorn about a nation that feels itself fitly represented by its poets, and the very great distinction of that very great little book *Poems from the Russian* (FABER, 3/6) is that, first and foremost, its contents are indubitably poetry and indubitably Russian. Mrs. FRANCES CORNFORD has put into English verse what her collaborator Mrs. E. POLIONOWSKY SALAMAN has translated. The verse aims not only at fidelity to the original but at producing a poem which will stand on its own English feet. The latter aim has certainly been attained. One suspects that the former has too. Here you have the work of twelve poets: from Krylov, who mocked Napoleon in persiflage borrowed from La Fontaine, to Blok, the Polish-Russian mystic who died honoured by the Bolsheviks. Admirable miniature lives set each poet four-square in his period; and one notes the recurrent phenomenon of an intellectual cherished at first by the aristocracy to be cast out when he pleads the cause of the poor. The poet, however, is not a proletarian. He is an aristocrat—a serving aristocrat—himself. Pushkin's magnificent "*Exegi Monumentum*," Lermontov's tenderly-bucolic "My Country," Tyutchev's matchless "*Silentium*," testify alike to his intimacy with mankind and to his remoteness.

H. P. E.

Mare Meum

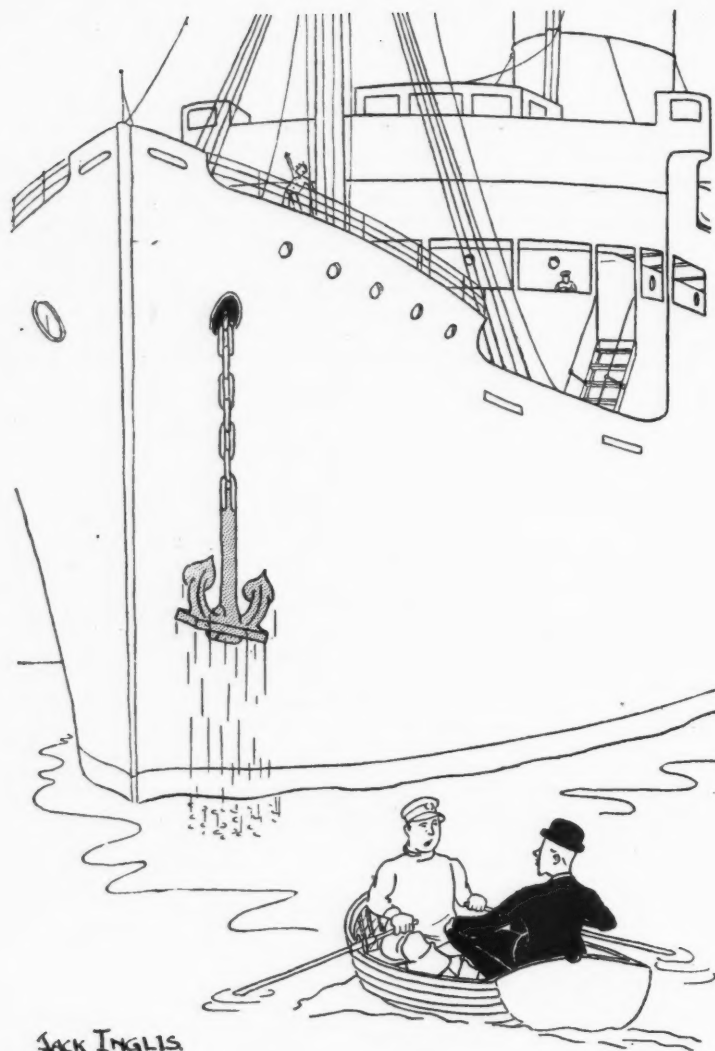
"By the seashore a powerful, bearded man sits on a stone, his elbow on his knee, his chin resting upon a massive fist. He stares fixedly into the west. A few great tears trickle from his eyes. . . . What ails this grieving man? Where are we?" We are, not much to our surprise if we are acquainted with EMIL LUDWIG's style, at the beginning

of *The Mediterranean: Saga of a Sea* (HAMISH HAMILTON, 15/-). The man is Odysseus, and he is weeping for home. "Calypso offers him the life of a god, and yet Homer has him sit weeping on the beach—him, the craftiest and boldest, the great adventurer." Such are the contradictions of human nature; but Herr LUDWIG, a painter of vast canvases, cannot linger over any of the figures with which he dots his panorama. Dismissing Odysseus, he turns to the Mediterranean, the long inland sea which enabled "the little whimsical genius of Europe" to develop freely in spite of the near neighbourhood of the two massive colossi of Asia and Africa. The advantage of the Mediterranean from the standpoint of the biographer of Napoleon, Goethe, Cleopatra, Jesus Christ, Wilhelm II, Hindenburg, Roosevelt, Bismarck and Lincoln is that the countries whose shores it washes and the men and gods who can plausibly be mentioned in connection with it are of considerably greater interest to the general reader than the countries, men and gods connected with any other sea. "I can only give my own Mediterranean. . . . The best historians have always written subjectively," Herr LUDWIG says in his introduction. Fortunately Herr LUDWIG's subjectivity is not of an out-of-the-way order. He is a master of large generalizations which have all the advantage of sounding profound and none of the irksomeness of stimulating thought—"Yahweh was the first god to lead an ascetic life": "If we consider the year 400 B.C., we find three symbolic events grouped closely round it": "Ovid was indeed a pander, like every poet": "John XXII, the greatest banking brain among the Popes": "Boccaccio solved the problem of his time by his dazzling skill in living": "If the Middle Ages were like an endless autumn, the Renaissance was a blazing summer": "Titian, like the Mediterranean, scarcely knew any tides": "The idea of bases was as sharp in his (Napoleon's) mind as it had been in Cromwell's." However, it is all very readable, and, in the present circumstances, a voyage across Herr LUDWIG's Mediterranean offers at least a relatively inviting experience.

H. K.



"Now then—what's all the trouble about?"



JACK INGLIS

"I still don't understand how they get it through that hole."

Old Faithful

THE shortage of alarm-clocks does not embarrass me, and I fancy there are many other people similarly untroubled. Surely, in the good old prolific days, those cheap alarm-clocks with the bell on the top (they started fooling about and burying the bell inside later) were the best bargains since the introduction of commerce. They had only to be treated right and they would go for ever, although perhaps that is where most

people failed. They looked after them too carefully. Actually they required to be treated rough. That may sound a contradiction of ordinary lay reasoning, but science provides many similar instances, such as the air becoming colder the nearer it is to the sun. The same sort of quaint law governs the old alarm-clocks.

I purchased the one I am now using well over twenty years ago in Petticoat Lane. I was sucked down with a lot

more people who had only thought to pass the end of the street, and, in an effort to evade the blandishments of a woman selling walnut toffee and a man who wanted to cut my silhouette, I passed into a swirl round a cheap jewellery stall. The stall-keeper was a man with a hoarse supercharged voice, and he looked as though the evening before he had attended the equivalent, in his world, of a Rugger dinner. I feel sure that he already possessed the knowledge I have since acquired, for he held the clock with the face in one hand while he slapped the back of it with the other at every reduction in price, as though it were a tortoise. If I remember aright he started at fifteen shillings and the clock went to me at two and threepence. The stall-keeper put it in a box that would have cost two and threepence these days, although I doubt whether sheer altruism prompted the gesture. "Sold to a ruddy burglar!" were almost his exact words as he handed me the clock.

I took it to my rooms and the next morning was aroused by a noise that sounded as though Big Ben had decided to crepitate instead of toll. I made a frenzied grab to stop it, but the clock slipped out of my hands and, hitting a knob on the chest of drawers, bounced under the wardrobe. For one charged moment while it was in flight I thought that I had wasted two and threepence, but the clock fiercely persisted in urging me to rise, only more loudly now because of confined space. From a position on my stomach I found that I could not quite reach it, and still the alarm sounded. Finally I had to edge the wardrobe from the wall, and just as I made room enough to insert my arm the bell stopped. I felt grateful, people were beginning to hammer on the walls. The clock still was cock-a-hoop, so I returned it to the top of the chest of drawers.

Thereafter it developed a mania for slipping through my fingers, whether through my own clumsiness or because it had a jinx I never really ascertained. On one occasion it had a submarine experience. I was in lodgings at the time and my bedroom contained a washstand complete with a large earthenware basin and one of those Brobdingnagian ewers three-quarters full of water that are so difficult to drink from in the middle of the night. I was winding the clock one evening when it flew from my fingers into the ewer. I had not begun to undress and instantaneously was beset by the type of urgent decision from which psychologists are fond of judging our mental nimbleness—whether it would

be quicker to bare my arm sufficiently to thrust it to the bottom of the ewer, or empty the contents into the basin and retrieve the clock from the shallows. I forget which procedure I adopted, but at that moment a fellow boarder entered and advised me to pump plenty of oil into the clock. I followed the advice, but I do not know whether it was necessary, as the clock still ticked vigorously, albeit with a sound akin to that of a paddle-wheel until it had thrashed the water inside through the apertures in the back.

It accompanied me when I married, but my wife refused to have such a battered object in the bedroom. I protested mildly, but she pointed to a case that had once glittered like chromium but had now all the dimness of pewter and several caked trickles of candle-grease down the flanks. So the old clock was banished to the lumber-room and we acquired an electrical contraption. The new clock had its novelty, as I was now aroused by a call emitted from sheer noiselessness, although a period elapsed before I could sleep properly because of the silence. Years went by and then, about twelve months ago, the new clock showed that it was fallible. One day it began to give a miniature imitation of Mount Etna in eruption; something had fused or something. I called on the local electrician, but his case against the authorities for depleting his staff was so harrowing that I forgot my own errand and found myself commiserating with him. Nevertheless I was in a dilemma, since it was essential that I arose. And then I remembered the old clock.

I took it from the shelf and at last saw it decline to function. For one thing it was thick with fluff. I resolved to repair it myself. Having removed the fluff I did the usual thing an unskilled man does when he essays to mend a clock—took off the back and poked about hopefully with a darning-needle. It was unavailing and I was almost in despair when I suddenly recollected the panacea for reviving cheap alarm-clocks. I give it now for chance there is only one of my readers who has not heard of it. You put them in the oven.

Having insinuated into the works a feather soaked in paraffin oil, I put the clock into the kitchen oven regulated to a gentle heat. The hour was late and the rest of the family had retired. Once a phalanx of aeroplanes roared overhead, but otherwise the silence was absolute. I listened intently, as almost on a similar occasion when very, very young I had listened for the first faint crack of my jumping beans.

Nothing happened so I altered the position of the clock. Still nothing happened; accordingly I experimented with different positions. At last I was rewarded, the clock made a noise. I sharply spun it round. Thenceforward it went, half-heartedly at first as though wondering whether a come-back was worth while, and then with an increasing stroke that quickened to full sledge. And there it is now—almost thirty years old, with paraffin stains approximating to a map of some of the Hebrides on its face—returned to add its quota to the war effort although propped at an angle of thirty degrees. What a clock! What a veteran! And what a two-and-threepennyworth!

A Seious Watime Poblem

MY little potable has given out on one key and the trouble this causes me is considerable, especially in view of the death of new typewites. It is no good aguing get a new typewite, that would be like shouting "A hose! A hose! My kingdom for a hose!" Witing unde these distessing ciumstances is difficult in the exteme and people think my style is affected, though in some ways I think it is moe pictuesque. I don't like to ty substituting a "w," as some wods, like pefect, will not pemit of this. Besides, that would savou of esatz.

Possibly I could engage a stenographe o an amanuensis, but my little potable has time and time again demonstrated what a good fiend to me it is. I can't go back on it now. When I fist leaned of the tagedy that had stuck my little machine the immediate gavity and impotence of the situation somewhat escaped me. This singula failue came without waning o potent of any kind and fo a time I was postate with gief. My pleasant visions of becoming a successful fee-lance journalist cashed about me—I was a boken man. On medical advice I took a vacation and on the pies of Blackpool I sought inspiation. Wapped in solitude fo weeks I at length decided that I would just have to cope without this vital link.

I have now fully gained my usual confidence and I play contact bidge (the cads game) o ty to foget. Doctos tell me that afte the expiation of six months I shall be nomal again.

Certain phases may be difficult to gasp but it is supising how soon one can get used to it. I still keep my editos abeast of the news in my tiny potion of a column. I had hoped to descibe my baptism of battle at the second font but I shall not be able to epot much of that. Still, it might be wose, imagine if I wee a lexicogaphe. I would be in the cat.

The Dancing Hours

"BACK IN 20 MINUETS."

Notice on Office Door.



"You're not eating—is there anything wrong with the food or is it some girl?"

The Novel Readers

MY friends are either Great Readers, have no time for reading, or can never find anything to read. The Great Readers tell me that they were always found curled up with a book on window-sills or in ingle-nooks from a very early age. As they grow too old to curl up they take to joining libraries and buying class "A" subscriptions in order to get books just before everybody else starts to talk about them. The trouble is that their book-lists are so long that the people who have class "B" subscriptions often catch up with them on a sensational novel while they are still dutifully reading through things like *Forward Russia*, *Backward Britain*, *Right-about Germany*, *Upside-down Roumania* and the rest.

Far worse are those who have no time for reading. They are smugly busy with what they term "a hundred and one little things," and at the end of the day they fall asleep as soon as their heads touch the pillow as though they were fitted up with some electrical interlocking device. But on long railway journeys they are revealed. They sit with glazed eyes for slow miserable hours, or wonder what the next station will be. If you offer them your paper they are not above glancing at it, but so quickly do they gently lay it on your knee again that you feel rebuked for having time, and imagining that they have time, even in a railway carriage, for reading. One day I hope to catch one of these fellows glancing at a newspaper upside-down, and

then the whole sticky sham will be exposed.

We who belong pathetically to the class who can never find anything to read have not received the guidance we have a right to expect. My father will willingly read anything you put into his hands and the whole world will be dead to him until he has reached the last word on the last page. For weeks afterwards he will give you little snippets of the plot or uphold the author's views against heavy odds. But after that, unless you quickly find him another story, he will take to reading labels on jam-pots, and conversation will consequently narrow down and become technical.

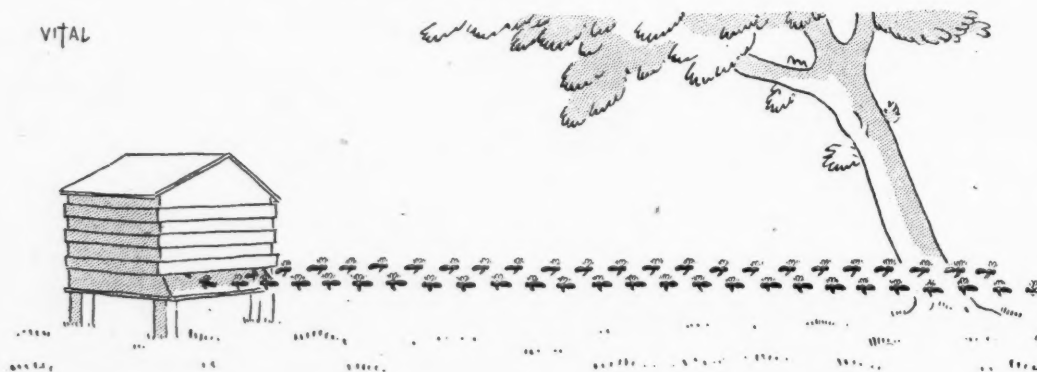
Writers will not cater for this class, often thinking it smart to write a short book. The reviewers, who are paid by the piece, are naturally not going to object to this, and seldom mention the matter at all, but my father's first comment will be "I don't think the author can be very clever to write such a short book," or "His circle must be very limited if he can only put six active characters in the whole tale." In fact my father demands quantity in a writer, and I support him absolutely.

Along with other members of the class in need of guidance I like a novel (we call them books, but some people make the distinction) to teach me something. Mind you, the writers who take it on themselves to teach me about life in general are going rather far, because I have probably had more

time to get about than they have. I mean that if the story is staged in a wine shop I must be told how much they keep in stock, where the bottles come from, what profit is made and what sort of insurance policy the seller takes out. When I have mastered all these details I am prepared to be interested in the rounded white throat of the wine-seller's daughter.

Once I read a fascinating story woven into the organization of a gigantic hotel. By the time the hero and owner had found the right wife I was quite equal to managing the largest hotel in London. Detective stories are often cunningly laid in hospitals or advertising offices, so that even if you do not spot the murderer till the final show-down on the operating-table, you can ever afterwards hold your own with the leading surgeons of our time.

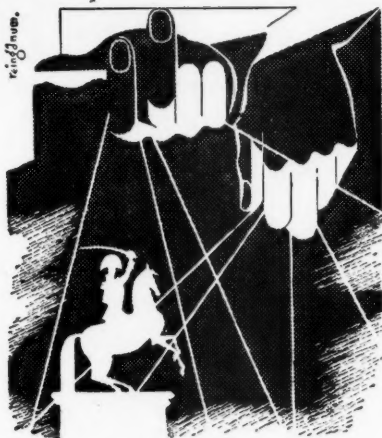
I hope that I have made it quite clear that we are the backbone of the reading public and that we must have books (novels, you know) long and full of sound detail. It may be worth throwing out that there is still room for a masterpiece on the black market, the sale of sham antiques, and the canal system of Great Britain. I repair machine tools myself, and could give any ambitious young writer a wealth of detail which I suggest he builds up into a book called *The Romance of the Turning Lathe* or *The Mystery of the Missing Gear-wheel*. Frankly, it would not matter which, once the technical background was on a sound basis.



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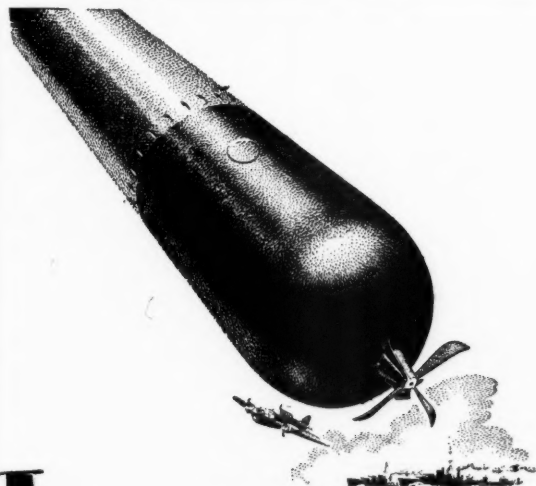
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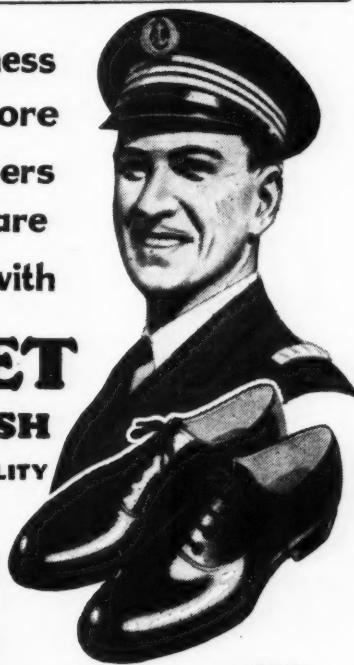
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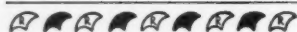
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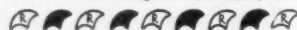
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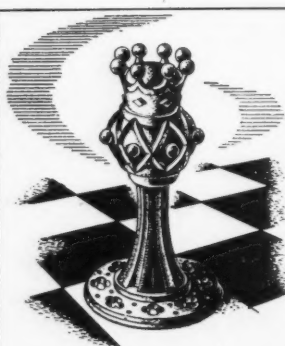


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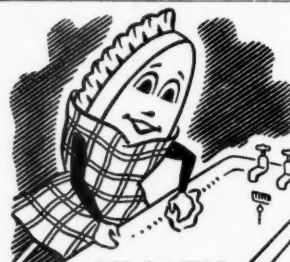
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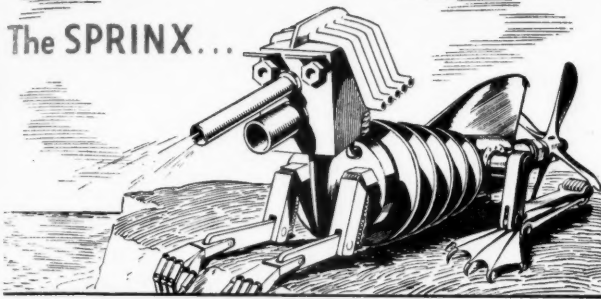
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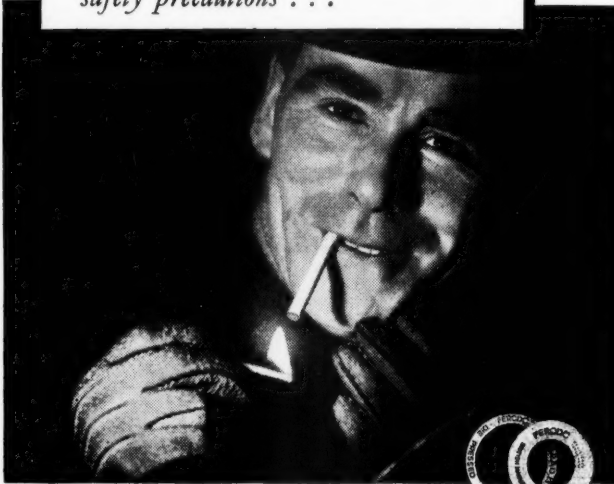


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but you can take the wisest
safety precautions . . .*



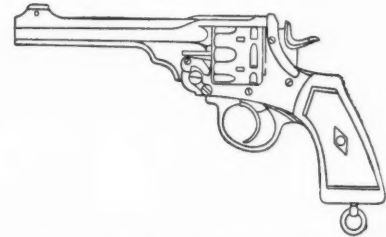
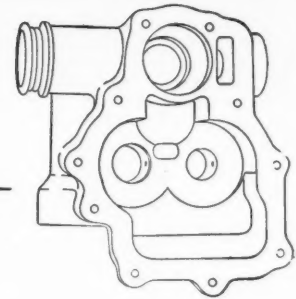
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